

A

# FEW PLAIN WORDS

IN RESPECT TO THE

American Sunday-school Union,

BY

REV. R. B. WESTBROOK.

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## A FEW PLAIN WORDS.

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THE American Sunday-school Union has now been before the public for nearly one third of a century. Its principles are well known, and its practical operations have been followed, by the blessing of God, with the most encouraging results. This Society is, what its name indicates, a *union* of Christians of different names, to promote objects of common interest.

The American Sunday-school Union, let it be remembered is the only Society in our country, formed on the *union* principle, whose special mission is to children and youth.

This institution is not, as some have supposed, a mere book-publishing establishment, but is eminently a *missionary* organization, accountable to the Christian community, whose servant it is, and dependent on its faithfulness and efficiency for public confidence and patronage. While it is desirable that the publication department of this society, should be endowed with a sufficient capital, it should be distinctly understood, that as a *book-selling* enterprise it neither asks nor receives charitable, pecuniary aid. It only asks *donations* to pay for the books, which are *given* to the *needy*—and to sustain the Sunday-school missionaries, whom it has in commission.

In attempting to bring the claims of the Sunday-school Union before the churches, it has recently been found that

many persons are accustomed to regard this institution as a *rival* of denominational Boards and Societies, and as such, they think it ought to be excluded from the churches. When applications are made for collections—the reply is sometimes given, “We must sustain our own Board or Society, and therefore cannot admit your claim. We love the Sunday-school Union, and wish you great success; but you must excuse us from giving you a collection.” Now, if this is a sufficient reason for leaving the Society to take care of itself—its representatives ought to be satisfied—and should cease to press their claim—but if not, then they are bound to *meet* this objection.

If the American Sunday-school Union, is a *competitor* of denominational Societies—or if it occupies a position *antagonistic* to such institutions, its friends were not aware of the alleged fact. The American Sunday-school Union maintains the very same principles *now*, upon which it was organized more than thirty years ago, and while its friends claim that it has a great mission to accomplish, they disclaim all unfriendly feelings towards denominational institutions. The particular object contemplated by each is *distinct*, and therefore, there can be no actual *rivalry*. Every leading denomination has its Board, Society, Committee or Union, (so called) for the publication of “*distinctive doctrines*”—for the cultivation of “*denominational literature*,” and for the use of a “*peculiar phrasology*,” while the American Sunday-school Union, only proposes to publish those things in which evangelical Christians are united. Thus, while each denomination does its own *distinctive* work, in its own peculiar way, all may *unite* in doing a general work, certainly not less important.

The particular point under consideration, is this—*Shall Christians of different denominations continue to*

*unite, in promoting certain objects of common interest—or is all such co-operation to be regarded as impracticable and undesirable?*

*If not—to which of the churches shall the American Sunday-school Union look for pecuniary support, in the form of donations and collections?* If it was ever worthy of the co-operation of the various evangelical churches, it is *now*. If its claims are as strong, as we have been disposed to believe, every church in our land, ought, in some form, to make an annual contribution to its treasury. If it is worthy of *any* patronage in the form of donations, it is worthy of more than it now receives. If it has a claim upon *any* one leading evangelical denomination, it has a claim upon *every* one. If any one church ought to render pecuniary aid, to this Union Society, such aid should be withheld by none.

*No one denomination of Evangelical Christians can possibly assign a reason for withholding financial aid, from the American Sunday-school Union, which may not be urged, with equal propriety, by every other denomination.*

The question, then, assumes this form, Will the various evangelical churches of this country unite, *as churches*, in sustaining this Society, or is it their policy to exclude it from their benevolent list, and leave it to be sustained by individual and private contributions? Shall the people of our several congregations, who might feel willing to support this cause, be reached through the pulpit, or must they be reached through some other agency?

Will the reader carefully examine the following suggestions, in behalf of the American Sunday-school Union?

1. The labors of this Society are especially directed to the most hopeful and promising of our race.

It is emphatically, “the Society that takes care of the

children,"—not as a substitute for parental instruction, and ecclesiastical oversight, but in addition to all this, and especially where these influences are unknown.

All those arguments which are used to show the *value of youth*—the importance of home-evangelization, and of early piety; and the incomparable excellency of the great Sunday-school system, might be urged as so many reasons why the American Sunday-school Union should be liberally sustained by Christians of every name.

If souls are to be saved, by the grace of God, through those great truths, held in common by Christians—and if *youth* is the best time to make lasting religious impressions, and if these truths are to be brought to bear upon the heart and conscience, chiefly through the personal agency of the living teacher—eye meeting eye, and heart meeting heart; then the great system carried out by the American Sunday-school Union—as an evangelizing agency or missionary work—is not surpassed by any existing Society in the wide world.

2. Is it not desirable to fortify the minds of children with the cardinal doctrines of the gospel, in which all agree, even though we may not inculcate some of those peculiar doctrines in regard to which many good men differ?

This is the policy of our Union, viz.—to inculcate Scripture truths, held in common by the leading Christian denominations, leaving to each to supply freely what is peculiar to themselves.

And let it be remembered in this connection, that we can thus teach *all* that the most learned theologians, of all the most enlightened denominations, receive, *as clearly taught in the Scriptures*. While we cannot use phraseology that expresses denominational peculiarities, we can teach every doctrine of revelation, in all the varieties of

language, and terms, authorised by inspiration. We not only circulate the Bible without “note or comment”—but also *with* such “notes and comments,” as all evangelical Christians approve—upon every doctrine necessary to salvation. We suppress nothing which God has revealed, and we neither *compromise* nor *dilute* anything found in the Bible.

The true position of the American Sunday-school Union, is thus clearly stated in one of its annual reports :

“In our individual relations we uphold (and in our associated capacity we are far from opposing) the efforts of the various denominations of Christians to defend and propagate, by all lawful means, their respective views of truth and order. We would not, if we could, interfere with, depreciate, or abridge these efforts. They can be wisely and efficiently prosecuted without trespassing on the common right.

“But we find that as Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Reformed Dutch, Congregationalists, we can maintain the integrity of our relations to our respective churches and communities, while we can unite to teach *the truth that Christ taught, and as plainly as he taught it*. For, be it always remembered, that if we differ respecting the true construction of some of “the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth,” we then say only just what He said, leaving those who read or hear to judge of His meaning. In the doctrines of the supremacy of the inspired Scriptures, as the rule of faith and duty—the lost state of man by nature, and his exposure to endless punishment in a future world—his recovery only by the free, sovereign and sustaining grace of God, through the atonement and merits of a divine Redeemer, and by the influence of the Holy Spirit—the necessity of faith, repentance and holy living, with an open confession of the Saviour

before men, and the duty of complying with his ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper—in these doctrines we find the essential and leading truths of the Christian systems; in the reception of these doctrines we agree, and with God's help, we endeavour to teach and inculcate them on all whom we can properly reach."

3. The object contemplated by the American Sunday-school Union, is a work of such magnitude, as to call for the UNITED energies of Christians of every name.

To "plant a Sunday-school, wherever there is a population"—cannot be done by any *one* denomination, nor by the several denominations, through their separate organizations, as we shall hereafter show.

It has been estimated that there are about *five millions* of children and youth in our country, not at present reached by Churches or Sunday-schools. And we must not forget, that these *lambs* of Christ's flock, are scattered over a vast territory. The work to be done among the destitute, is incalculably great. And when we speak of *destitution*, we do not use the word in the sense in which it is used by many persons, as applicable to all places where *our* particular organization is not represented—but in its legitimate import. The harvest, truly, is great and the laborers are few, and in addition to what denominational agencies are doing, we need a *united* effort to explore the wilderness and the solitary place. There is enough for all to do, and much that requires the *united* strength of all Christians. Nor is it true that denominational Boards or Societies receive less money, in consequence of what the churches give to the American Sunday-school Union. It is well known that those churches which have done most for the Union, have been most liberal in sustaining their own denominational institutions. "There is that scattereth



and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.”

All that the churches give to the Sunday-school Union, is over and above what they give, or would have given, to their own denominational institutions, and is so much gain to the *common cause*.

4. By this union of Christians, of different names in promoting the fundamental doctrines of the gospel we secure an increase of moral power to be expended in the common cause of Christ. UNION IS STRENGTH—and the increase of *united* strength is not duly appreciated.

If *one* can chase a thousand, *two* can put *ten* thousand to flight! Beside the advantages arising from the augmented resources and instrumentalities of several denominations, united in a common enterprise, there is a commanding beauty, and *moral power* in such union which cannot be fully estimated. The conclusion in the popular mind is inevitable, that a cause which thus unites Christians of every name, *must* be a good one, and free from selfish and unworthy designs. That those things *must* be true, which so many enlightened Christians *unite* in publishing.

5. There are difficulties in many places which a Union Society can alone overcome.

This is especially true in our new States and territories—and in all rural districts and scattered communities. Many neighborhoods are composed of persons sympathising with as many different denominations, as there are families in the settlement, while others are suspicious of all sectarian names. Under such circumstances Sunday-schools can only be formed and sustained by some plan which shall *unite* those who hold in common the essential truths of Christianity. This the American Sunday-school Union does, and no other existing Sunday-school Society can do

it. If any human testimony is worthy of confidence, the Missionaries of this Society, have formed many thousands of Sunday-schools where no denominational school could possibly have succeeded; and there are still thousands of places where *union* schools must be planted and fostered, or multitudes of precious children must grow up in ignorance of those great saving truths, which form the basis of all orthodox creeds. And in addition to this it would be easy to show that books bearing the imprint of the American Sunday-school Union freely circulate where denominational publications are proscribed.

6. The American Sunday-school Union furnishes a practical illustration of the essential unity of the Protestant Church, and thus triumphantly answers the popular objection of infidels and papists.

It has been well said by a living minister, now a professor in a theological seminary; "What Christians agree in, is what makes them Christians, what they differ in is what gives rise to their other names—names which will not be known in heaven, and it were well, if they should from this moment pass into perpetual oblivion. It is the faith that all Christians hold in common, in which salvation lies. It does not lie in points of sectarian controversy, but in those great fundamental truths which unite all Christians together, and makes them one brotherhood, one indissoluble body—the body of Christ." This is the true UNITY of the Christian Church, and it is the glory of the American Sunday-school Union, that it is a living illustration of this blessed and animating doctrine.

7. The principles and plans of the American Sunday-school Union, tend to soften the asperities of partizan zeal, and to promote that charity which is so highly commended in the Scriptures.

This Society is, in fact, an evangelical alliance, in which

Christians may exercise the most lovely graces of religion; and while it promotes Christian fellowship—the communion of saints—it affords occasions of mutual instruction and improvement. If the American Sunday-school Union has power to unite the disciples of Christ more closely in “the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace,”—it is worthy of all commendation. It was the prayer of Christ that his people might be *one*, (John xvii. 11,) and every institution that promotes this object, is worthy of patronage.

If the foregoing considerations are founded in fact, the American Sunday-school Union is worthy of the co-operation of every Evangelical Church in our country. The demands upon the Society were never greater than at present. And there are many reasons, why this work is *especially* important at *this time*. It is impossible to respond favorably to the *daily* applications for Libraries for poor schools, and to the increasing demand for Sunday-school Missionaries, unless the *means* are furnished by the Churches. The Society has no *income*, upon which to depend, to meet the expenses of its Missionary work, except what is furnished in the form of *donations* and *collections*.

Dr. Duff, the deservedly eminent Scotch missionary, in a late visit to the Society's building in Philadelphia, whilst stating his great satisfaction and delight at what he had heard of the Union principles and benevolent labors of the American Sunday-school Union, exclaimed with deep emotion, “There is nothing more grand and noble than this work of plucking souls from perdition! To pluck them from perdition, to save them—and then let them receive what stamp they may.”

May we not cherish the hope that an institution so catholic in its principles and so far-reaching in its beneficent

influences as the AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION will receive a larger share of public sympathy and more liberal contributions from private benevolence?

There are many persons in the community, of ample means, who feel kindly disposed towards the Society and its objects, but who are not within the range of its collecting agency. To these we would respectfully appeal for help; and to all our fellow-citizens we would say in the language of another—IF YOU WOULD SAVE THE COMMONWEALTH, LOOK WELL TO THE CHILDREN!

The following testimonies, (which might be multiplied indefinitely,) of well known gentlemen connected with different branches of the Christian Church, will further illustrate the principles and claims of the American Sunday-school Union.

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“ALL SHIELDS OF MIGHTY MEN.”

*Song of Sol. iv. 4.*

[REV. ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER, D. D., Presbyterian, Old School.]

The AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION, as a society, professes no creed but the Bible; although the individuals who are concerned in its management, belong to several distinct denominations, to the forms and peculiar opinions of which respectively, they adhere. But, in conducting Sunday-schools, they know no sect, but Christianity; no creed but the Bible.

It is manifest, from an examination of the constitution of the Sunday-school Union, that all its articles are catholic: no preference is there shown to any one denomination. And it is equally evident, from a consideration of the character of the gentlemen who compose the Board of Mana-

gers, that no partiality has been exhibited. It would scarcely be possible to form a board, with a more equal respect to the several denominations concerned in this enterprise; and, as far as is known to me, the same impartiality is manifest in the proceedings of the board, both in the selection of their officers and committees, and in the books selected for publication. \* \* \*

Hitherto, the American Sunday-school Union have not disappointed their friends in the course which they have pursued. They have not been accused of entertaining any sinister views, or attempting to interfere with the rights of any Christian community. \* \* \*

It can be truly stated, that the Managers of the American Sunday-school Union have ever been solicitous to obtain the co-operation of the clergy in their respective spheres of action and influence. \* \* \*

An exhibition of the views and plans of the American Sunday-school Union will no more interfere with the duties of those ordained to the sacred office, than speaking at the bar, or in the senate. And as there does exist a jealousy among the several denominations, or at least among some who belong to them, respectively, it might have some tendency to obviate the difficulty which has been felt on this point, if well qualified laymen should be commissioned as agents. \* \* \*

The experiment made by the American Sunday-school Union evinces, that small books, written in a lively style, and rendered interesting by pleasant narratives, are the kind of reading which is adapted to the taste of a large part of our adult as well as youthful population. For, although the libraries are intended particularly for the use of the children, yet it is found, that when the books are brought into the families to which the scholars belong, they are read with avidity by persons of all ages. By this means, the books published and distributed into every nook and corner of the United States, by the American Sunday-school Union, are producing a great effect on a vast multitude of people. An aged, intelligent, and pious judge of a county court, in New Jersey, said to the writer, that he read all the books of the American Sunday-school Union; and that while they were well adapted to youth,

they also suited him ; so that he perused them with avidity and edification. \* \* \* \*

By means of this institution, hundreds of thousands of children will receive the elements of a religious education, who would otherwise have remained in ignorance. Preachers cannot be multiplied so rapidly as to keep pace with the rapid advance of population in our new states and territories ; but SUNDAY-SCHOOLS CAN BE EXTENDED TO EVERY PLACE where there are inhabitants, and together with Bibles and tracts, and your own useful libraries, must, in many cases, SUPPLY THE PLACE OF A PREACHED GOSPEL. \* \* \* \*

There can be no doubt, that the American Sunday-school Union is highly in favor with all the friends of religion and sound morality in our country. Perhaps no other institution has so universally conciliated the affections of the people. It is with confidence, therefore, that I make this appeal to the public, to render promptly and liberally all the pecuniary aid which is needed. No permanent funds are contemplated by the society. Whatever sums may be received will be immediately applied to the important purposes of sustaining and enlarging the system of Sunday-schools. \* \* \* \*

And now I would appeal to the pious and benevolent of all denominations, to say whether this Institution, so extensive in its operations, so multiplied in its ramifications, and so beneficial to all classes of society in its results, shall be cramped or retarded in its career of usefulness for want of adequate pecuniary aid? \* \* \*

I am in favor of circulating and extending the truths of God's word by every practicable means, and when this can be done more effectually by united, than by individual effort, I am in favor of UNION.

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[REV. THOMAS SMYTH, D. D., Presbyterian, Old School.]

In every view, therefore, this Society commands our highest reverence, and our most hearty co-operation. It is not only commendable, wise, and expedient—it is *required* by the whole genius and spirit of Christianity, and by the positive and express teaching of apostolic wisdom, and the



authority of apostolic inspiration. It is based on the distinct acknowledgment of every truth fundamental to *salvation*, and leaves every denomination to enforce, according to its own views, the whole truth which they may deem to be essential to THE SYSTEM of the gospel, and the character of the church. \* \* \* \*

Whether we consider its basis, its principles, its object, its spirit, its instrumentality, its agency, its materials, or its end, it is alike admirable, Christian, and "glorifying to God."

Its *basis* is the fundamental truth of God; not that which is essential to the full development of *the science* or *theology* of salvation; nor that which every denomination of evangelical Christians may feel it important to hold forth and profess; nor that which is essential to the organization of Christian churches; but those truths which the word of God itself makes necessary to the attainment of salvation by every one who is capable of "believing with the heart and confessing with the mouth."

Its *principle* is, that all who can cordially receive these truths, shall co-operate together without compromising any denominational principle, or excluding any denominational effort; "in minding the same thing, and in walking by the same rule."

Its *object* is, the publication of these great fundamental and saving truths in such form and manner as may bring them most surely and most powerfully before the minds of the millions of children and youth of these United States. \* \* \* \*

Probably not less than twenty-five millions of copies of its publications have been circulated; and so pervaded are they with the essential truths of the Christian faith, that few if any of them can be shown, in which the method of a sinner's salvation is not so stated, that if the reader shall never see another book, or hear a sermon, he may know how to flee from "the wrath to come;" and in which, nevertheless, nothing is admitted that can in any way compromise or contravene those truths, which are by any deemed essential, either to the system of the truth or to the constitution of the church. \* \* \*

Let the AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION then be

dearer than ever to the hearts of Christians. Its "field is yet white to the harvest," and still enlarging in its illimitable extent. Its race is not run, nor its course finished. They are, in fact, only commenced. It has but acquired the experience, the skill, and the instrumentality, through which it may come up with accumulating force, "to the help of the Lord against the mighty." God, by his ever-blessed Spirit, is now even drawing together the hearts of his children, and inspiring them with thoughts of love, peace, union, and co-operation, against their *common* enemies, and in defence of their *common* principles.

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[REV. ALBERT BARNES, Presbyterian, New School.]

And we urge this as one of the strong claims which the American Sunday-school Union has to the patronage of the Christian world. Attached as we are, in our respective churches, to the peculiarities of our own denominations, and exercising in this respect, as we wish our children to do, the rights of Christian freemen; having no friendship for latitudinarian views, and no disposition to abandon what we deem to be truth on any subject, or in any form; and not aiming at the impracticable undertaking of breaking up all the religious denominations, or attempting to blend them into one; yet we do maintain, that the great doctrines of our common faith are *primary*, and that the peculiarities of the denomination are *secondary*; that it is of the utmost importance that these principles should be spread all over our country, and over the world; and that any society has strong claims on the patronage of the church at large, that shall be successful in inculcating these principles on the minds of the coming generation. It is time that the different religious denominations should love each other more, and become more thoroughly attached to the great common brotherhood; and we claim for the Sunday-school operations, alike from the avowed purpose of the American Sunday-school Union, and from the very nature of the enterprise, that it tends to this result, and that, therefore, it has a claim to the support of all who "love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity:"—that it tends to make the church more conformed to the standard of primitive Christianity, and to bring about the an-



swer to the prayer of our Redeemer, "that they all may be one."

It is on this principle that the American Sunday-school Union was formed, and that it has, for so many years, now prosecuted its quiet labors. Without designing to interfere with the efforts of the various religious denominations to prosecute their own distinctive views in any way they choose, the "Union principle is the only one on which this work can be most successfully prosecuted, especially among the sparsely settled, and greatly divided inhabitants of the new frontier States, where there are few of any one denomination, and yet some of nearly all of them." And as my residence for more than twenty years in the city where the seat of this Union is located, has brought me into personal acquaintance with many of its most active supporters, several of the Board being members of my church, I think it not indelicate or improper on this occasion to bear my testimony to the intelligence and fidelity which characterize its management, and to the value and high importance of its influence as a means of diffusing the great essential principles of the gospel throughout the land.

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[REV. N. S. S. BEMAN, D. D., Presbyterian, New School.]

*The catholic spirit* of your Society is admirably adapted to the state of things in the West. It often happens in that country, that a number of evangelical denominations are thrown together into the same society, and no one of them sufficiently large to sustain efficient religious institutions by itself. In Sunday-school operations they can all unite. They can all read your books, and aid in giving them circulation—for they breathe a liberal spirit, and are adapted to just such a state of things as here described. And in all circumstances, your books are well received by various evangelical sects. I was pleased to learn this fact when on the ground. They teach truths held in common by different churches, and wherever they are received and read, they form a bond of union, which is greatly needed in that country. The tendency of things is to division and exclusiveness, and every good book adapted to soften sectarian asperities, to break down walls of separation, and to throw the cords of brotherhood and affection around

Christian hearts in different churches, should be hailed as a harbinger of good. This is the very time to fill that country with your publications. I have no doubt but they would do more than all the agencies now in use to bring Christians together, and to induce them to unite their force against the common enemy—the powers of infidelity and Romanism—and thus insure success to the truth of God.

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[REV. G. W. BETHUNE, D. D., Reformed Dutch.]

As you love your country, the safety of your children's freedom, the salvation of your fellow sinners, and the honor of Him who alone can make us free, cherish the AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION, pray for it, give to it, and act in aid of it. Nor think you have done this, when you have opened schools for the children of Christian congregations. Go forth and gather the poor, the morally destitute, for whom the Sunday-school, like the gospel, was mainly intended. Nay, cease not until every child throughout our wide territory, from ocean to ocean, from the snow-capt mountain to the torrid plain, be invited to share with your own children the teachings of Jesus, the sanctification of the Spirit, and the hope of immortality. Amen.

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[REV. M. S. HUTTON, D. D., Reformed Dutch.]

In view of these several considerations, the American Sunday-school Union stands before us in an attitude of thrilling interest, and assumes an importance among our benevolent institutions which is surpassed by none. I do not intend to eulogize it. It needs not the aid of my voice, but I would press the thought that it is the only direct missionary society to the children of the United States; the combined missionary effort of the church of Christ to convert and save the next generation. To illustrate its importance I might speak of its peculiarly parental character, for it comes to thousands of our young immortals like a pious and loving mother, and, throwing its arms around them, teaches them to kneel and say, "Our Father who art in heaven," to thousands who would otherwise have no religious instruction, and who in this respect are truly orphans. Nay, might I not, if the quotation would not be deemed to show some want of reverence, say

that to many children the Sunday-school was a father to the fatherless. Yes, I might show that it occupies not only the place of a parent to many, but also that it is the action of the church's care and duty, and the exponent of the love of God and Christ, a kind of special providence exercised over children. But the train of thought which I have pursued leads me to confine my remarks to its missionary aspect.

When you look at the express design and operation of the American Sunday-school Union, you will see that this is precisely the term which best describes its true character. It is as much entitled as any other effort to the appellation, *an evangelical mission*. Its aim is as clearly and as directly to convert and save souls as is the aim of any of our Boards of foreign or domestic missions; and, regarded in this light, I ask, Was there ever, or can there at this hour be found a more important class of persons to whom the church can send her missionaries?

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[JUDGE McLEAN, Methodist Episcopal.]

And amongst other agencies I will name last, though not least, the American Sunday-school Union. This enterprise stands prominently among the preventive means of evil, and the positive means of good. Its organization is simple, its operations are economical, extensive and effectual.

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The extraordinary success of this enterprise, gives to its friends the most cheering hopes of the future. Much has been accomplished already, and that increases the power of a future and an accelerated progress.

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We commend this enterprise to every friend of morality, to every one who loves his country, and desires to perpetuate our free institutions.

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Let the moral agencies of our country, (so potent for good when their power is *concentrated* and rightly directed,) make this a common ground of effort.

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[REV. DR. KIDDER, Corresponding Secretary of the S. S. Union of the Methodist Church.]

We wish distinctly to say, that in our judgment there ought never to be any antagonism, between the American

Sunday-school Union, and the Sunday-school Union of our church. We regard each Institution as having a special and proper sphere of action, to which if it confine itself, no difficulty ever need arise. \* \* \*

We doubt not that numbers of such neighborhoods exist, (where Union Schools can alone be sustained,) and we fully concur in the suggestion that it is better to let *such* union Sunday-schools stand until "the basis is wide enough and strong enough to sustain the more permanent and important Church organization; and then let its elements be separated gently, each denomination securing to itself its own portion as the nucleus of a Church of its own faith."

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[REV. FRANCIS WAYLAND, D. D., Baptist.]

And now, ye favored managers of this great and blessed Union! Ye parents, teachers, ministers, churches, friends of revivals, patriots, rulers, and judges of the land—under the smiles of heaven, the success of this cause depends upon your prayers and your efforts. You are all deeply, and may I not add, equally, interested in its success. By helping it forward, you advance the interest "of pure and undefiled religion"—you promote the happiness and true glory of the nation—you honor God and bless the world.

Go on then, I beseech you, from duty to duty—from mountain to mountain—from river to river. Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Never rest till the noble work is done—till a Sabbath-school is established wherever there are children to enjoy its blessings. Never rest till you hear the shout of "Hosanna to the Son of David," from all the Atlantic coast—from the shores of the Lakes and the tops of the Alleghanies, and then from the *multitudes on multitudes, in the great valley of de-cision!*

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[REV. JAMES B. TAYLOR, Baptist.]

The volumes of the American Sunday-school Union ought to receive a much wider circulation. It will not be saying too much to assert their incomparable excellence, and their happy adaptation to the improvement of the young. Their variety and value have escaped the attention of much the larger portion of our fellow citizens.

They are suited not only to the capacities of children, but many of them to the man of mature age, and may afford instruction alike to the intelligent and illiterate. In the name of the Union, we invite inspection. They deserve a place in all the families of this land. No parent need fear their influence. They may with safety be placed in the parlor and the chamber, the counting-room and the workshop. Unlike the ephemeral and in many instances licentious publications which are daily issuing from the press, they leave behind them impressions of the purest kind, and impart most valuable information. No good man of any denomination could enter upon the examination of their merits, without being surprised at the judgment and talent with which they have been prepared. He would not fail to be convinced that in their compilation the wisest heads and best hearts have been employed. \* \*

The providence of God most loudly calls on the American public to give a more extensive circulation to these volumes. An engine of incalculable, yet salutary power, is furnished, and it may at will be made to operate with continually increasing force. At a comparatively small expense, any neighborhood, and without difficulty, the whole nation itself, may be supplied. Where are our men of property who wish to make a profitable use of their money, such an investment as shall benefit their posterity? Where are our patriots who desire the perpetuation of our venerated institutions? Our philanthropists, who seek the weal of their species? Let them look at these facilities for effecting extensive good to their country and the world. A single man may through these volumes be the instrument of making impressions on a thousand minds which shall survive the records of time.

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[REV. S. H. TYNG, D. D., Protestant Episcopal.]

But the more I have considered the benevolent character, and the beneficent operation, and the very peculiar adaptation to usefulness and success, of their special effort, the more am I convinced of their just claim to the liberal and persevering co-operation of Christians of every name. This Union, am I persuaded, has done more towards correcting and sanctifying the juvenile reading of our country, and towards furnishing healthful and useful books for



the minds of our children, than all other persons whatsoever combined. I have been for several years stationed, by the providence of God, at the seat of its operations, and have thoroughly marked the influence of its plans. The gentlemen who are engaged in it have given an amount of gratuitous labor and attention to the sustaining of the important effort, which I am convinced no other benevolent institution of our land demands. They have, besides, always been themselves the largest contributors to the funds upon which they have acted.

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[REV. H. V. D. JOHNS, D. D., Protestant Episcopal,]

For one, I have always valued, most highly, this association, but never so much so as since I have been led to the conclusions already stated. I now behold it filling an important post among those mighty principles which are moulding the destiny of nations, elevating humanity from the dust and preparing souls for heaven.

I wish to contribute my feeble effort to raise this institution in the estimation of my countrymen, as also in its own regards; for never will it do, nor shall we ever do for it, what ought to be done, until we are truthfully impressed with its real position and relation to our country and the world.

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[REV. S. S. SCHMUCKER, D. D., Evangelical Lutheran.]

The Sabbath-school system is admirably adapted *to train up a generation of Christians for millennial plans and millennial action.*

It is admitted that in the halcyon days of millennial triumph, the minor peculiarities of sect will be thrown into the background, and Christians meet on the broad platform of the Bible: that they will give prominence to the things in which they agree; that they will husband their resources by fraternal concert and co-operation; and that gigantic schemes will be undertaken for the conversion of the world. Now, it must be obvious to all that the Sabbath-school system of the American Sunday-school Union, if faithfully carried out, is happily adapted to answer all these indications.       \*                       \*                       \*

Again, *Sabbath-schools conducted on the plan of the American Union will prepare the churches to avoid dis-*

*cussion about minor differences, and to husband their strength by fraternal concert and co-operation; will lead to the conception of gigantic schemes for the conversion of the world, and enable every man, woman, and child that loves the Lord, to engage in their execution.*

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[REV. HEMAN HUMPHREY, D. D., Congregational.]

In this view we contemplate with admiration and gratitude the principles, and the spirit of the AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION. Without affirming its exemption from imperfections common to all benevolent associations, conducted by fallible and sinful men, we venture to claim for it a combination of so much that is divine in principle, comprehensive and effective in movement, pure and elevated in spirit, as justly challenges universal confidence and support.

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And I hesitate not to say, that I am yet ignorant of the institution which operates at once so silently and with equal power to bring about the great moral revolution of our country, for which every patriotic heart, and every tongue of hallowed fire, send forth their devoutest aspirations.

Happy were it for Zion were the objects of the AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION better understood, and its principles more justly appreciated, for its means and its results could not then fail of indefinite enlargement. Certain it is that its claims on Christian patronage are not adequately met, either through ignorance of its far-reaching and Divine philanthropy, or through the short-lived triumph of unworthy jealousies over the clearest evidence of its practical utility.

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[REV. R. S. STORRS, D. D., Congregational.]

Here, in this blessed Union of hearts and hands, of counsels and prayers—in this flowing together of the waters of life from so many different sanctuaries, I see a pledge that every child in the city and the country, on the seaboard and by the great rivers of the west, shall be sought out, and have the opportunity of being instructed “in the right way of the Lord.”

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But it as little needs the eulogy as the defence of my

feeble voice. It has excited the admiration, and kindled the eloquence of the statesman, as well as the divine. Mightier voices never thundered in our National Capitol, than have spoken its praises. Wherever its name is mentioned, the distinctions of party and sect are at once forgotten; and on a memorable, recent occasion, we have seen “the north give up, while the south kept not back.”

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And need I stop to show how admirably, how perfectly, it is adapted to the wants of our country, and the character of our free institutions? Whose soul does not kindle within him, when he thinks of what has already been done by this institution, and of what it is now doing in every corner of the land?—How it seeks out the poor and the ignorant, and by bringing them together every week within the Sabbath-school, with children of better circumstances, introduces them into a new world of thought, and feeling, and moral influence. How it everywhere offers to adopt the fatherless, and to assist the widow in training up her family for usefulness, and for glory. How its instructions “drop as the rain, and distil as the dew; as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.” How like an angel of mercy, it visits where the Bible is scarcely known, and no morning or evening sacrifice goes up, and no pious counsel ever flows from parental lips; and how it allures the little strangers to God whom it finds in these abodes of moral death, and turns their feet into the path of life.